

# The Handmaid's Playlist

College English

Ms. Pahomov

Tybria Bowser

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## [You'll Be Back](#)

"You'll be back" is from a play called "Hamilton" about the founding father, Alexander Hamilton. The song is sung by the king of Britain and he is responding to the colonies wanting independence from Britain. Within the song the king sings "You say our love is draining and you can't go on". This is similar to a scene in the book on page 180. In it, After being fired from her job and trying to adjust to her new life Offred says "By this time I'd started to cry, without warning". Offred is at a loss after being thrown in this system. She doesn't want to be complacent but at the same time, she is questioning what else can she do? This inner turmoil drains her, causing her to cry with no warning.

The lyric "Cause when push comes to shove, I will kill your friends and family to remind you of my love" represents the irony of the government's indoctrination of the people of Gilead so well. They essentially have made them believe that everything oppressive and harmful about Gilead is actually beneficial. It shows through when Offred states "Women were not protected then. I remember the rules, rules that were never spelled out but every woman knew" on page 12. Both in the song and in Gilead there are leaders who are power hungry using the "you know what it was like before, this is the only other way" excuse to keep people docile.

## [Good days](#)

Offred is often left to her own devices due to the intense rules handmaid's have to follow. Oftentimes, she finds herself bored. There is one verse within the song that goes "Got me a war in my mind. Gotta let go of weight, can't keep what's holdin' me. Choose to watch the world break up in front of me. All the while, I'll await my armored fate with a smile." The

whole verse can be applied to a plethora of events throughout the book. Specifically on page 69, where Offred talks about how much time is spent doing nothing. In her own words “This is one thing I wasn’t prepared for – the amount of unfilled time... I wait, washed, brushed, fed, like a prize pig”. The artist and Offred are making a statement about being stuck with only themselves and waiting. Offred specifically waits until her “purpose” of bearing a child is fulfilled. Much like pigs are treated as if their only purpose is to be butchered, Offred is treated as if what only matters is her womb. The only thing that is left for the pig and Offred is to await their fate.

### Say No To This

“Say No To This” is another song from “Hamilton” that can convey a scene from “The Handmaid’s Tale” very well. Hamilton is tempted into having an affair with another man’s wife while also being married. He sings out “Longing for Angelica, missing my wife” as he’s contemplating the affair and the commander seems to be in a similar situation based on his conversation with Offred during their second Scrabble meeting. On page 158 Offred asks “But why show it to me?” to which he responds “Who else could I show it to?”. Offred then suggests his wife to which he responds that she wouldnt understand and that they rarely talk nowadays. It's reasonable to draw the conclusion that although they might’ve been close in the past, Gilead has put a rift between them. He most likely misses the intimate relationship he once had with his wife before Gilead. Intimacy and love are a taboo in Gilead but it is clear that even people who seemingly benefit from this regime still miss affection and intimacy now that it is no longer readily available.

### Silly Sam

“Silly Sam” is a short song and the last half fits Offred’s manipulative thoughts and what the reader suspects the Commander’s intent is so well. In the song, the artist sings “Silly Sam, what a man. Not a fan of ya damn. You play so many games. Tic Tac Toe, Mario, dominoes, and uno”. The “games” referenced in the song can not only be representative of scrabble but also his way of amusing himself with Offred’s lack of freedom. One example of this is when he buys her hand lotion and watches as she applies it to her skin on page 159. His amusement leaves the reader feeling like he is kind of treating Offred as entertainment which wouldn’t be surprising considering at this point in the book, we did not know if he had much interaction with women outside of Serena Joy.

“Silly Sam” is also representative of Offred’s inner conflict about whether she likes the commander or not. You see her turmoil throughout the book and especially after scrabble games. She contemplates how to play the situation into one that benefits her. She knows

that she'll be severely punished for capitalizing off of this small freedom the Commander has granted her but as she says on page "There's no doubt he holds real power... But there must be something he wants, from me. To want is to have a weakness". Within this section she also speaks on the trouble she could be in from entertaining the Commander. The fact that she is following through with the Commander's request to come to his office suggests she thinks the trouble may be worth it for the power she believes he can give her. Similarly, the song states "If you play your cards right, It'll be alright. And if you don't, you're in trouble for life."

### [Ghost in the Machine](#)

The relationship between Offred and Luke develops quite quickly after Serena Joy sends them on a mission to procreate with one another. One may think that they fall in love and comfort each other through the oppressive regime but, instead they use each other for sex. Although, it feels like for Offred that it's about more than sex. It's about being connected to another human for her. "Ghost in the Machine" represents this want through the lyrics. The artist sings about a sexual relationship with no strings attached but she also sings about what she seeks from this relationship. She says "I need humanity. Yall lack humanity, drowning in vanity. Craving humanity." Luke makes it clear that sex is the main objective and that love is a little too dangerous for him. He closes himself off by talking a little bit and asking little questions when Offred initiates conversation. But, this doesn't stop Offred from basking in the company of another human being, especially a man. "I want to see what can be seen, of him, I take him in, memorize him... talk too much. I tell him things I shouldn't."

[Playlist](#)